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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: (C) PREVAL SEEKS CHANGE IN MINUSTAH STATUS PRIOR
TO MANDATE RENEWAL

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson, reasons 1.5(b) and (d)

(U) 1. This is an action request. See para 4.

¶2. (C) UNSRSG Hedi Annabi tells me that Haitian President Rene Preval intends to seek a change in the MINUSTAH mandate from Chapter 7 to Chapter 6 status. Arguing that bringing MINUSTAH here under Chapter 7 sends the signal to investors that Haiti is a "war zone," and ups insurance rates, Preval told Annabi on October 1 that he is writing the UNSC President to request that the Council revisit this issue prior to vote on the extension of the MINUSTAH mandate. Annabi added that Preval briefly raised this issue with UNSYG Ban Ki Moon during his courtesy call at the UNGA last month; the SYG tried to dissuade Preval but noted that this matter was more in the purview of the UNSC rather than the SYG's office.

¶3. (C) Annabi told me that he argued strongly with Preval that opening this matter now might unravel the Security Council consensus, carefully crafted in 2004-2005, which brought MINUSTAH to Haiti. He expressed deep concern that moving to Chapter 6 status could open discussions in certain capitals about troop commitment levels, calling into question MINUSTAH's current configuration. Preval, he said, made it clear that he wants MINUSTAH to stay through the end of his term (2011.) But Preval has, deliberately or not, misinterpreted the difference between the two chapters and will argue in his letter that MINUSTAH's military role should now evolve into a developmental presence. Preval does not understand, Annabi states, that MINUSTAH troop contributor countries may not wish to play that role and could use any such change to dial back their engagement here. Furthermore, Annabi cautioned the President that the current agenda facing the Council is such that any effort to rework MINUSTAH could get bogged down or fail, leaving Haiti without a MINUSTAH presence at all.

¶4. (C) Comment and Action Request. Preval has not yet raised this issue with us here. My Chinese, Canadian and French colleagues all agree that from our vantage point here this is a terrible idea which opens a Pandora's box of issues better left closed. Moving MINUSTAH from Chapter 7 to Chapter 6 status has been a hobbyhorse of the Minister of Planning for some time - he often argues that it will have a positive impact on investment - but this is the first time we have heard Preval pick up on it. The link to investor decisions in this difficult economic environment is laughable. In reality, I suspect that Preval is seeking more immediate access to resources and foolishly believes that a new MINUSTAH configuration will cause them to materialize. Preval is currently in Miami attending the Miami Herald Conference on the Americas. I will seek a meeting with him on his return to discuss the matter. Please provide guidance on USG position on Preval's proposal.
SANDERSON